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ABSTRACT

This bulletin is intended to share research-based promising practices with educators including family members, teachers, building administrators, and paraprofessionals. Using a question-and-answer format, it discusses the definition of positive behavior intervention and supports (PBIS) and characteristics of PBIS. Program characteristics include: (1) as a systems approach, PBIS strategies are implemented at the preschool, specific setting, classroom, and individual child level and use routines or procedures to support child behavior appropriately; (2) expectations for children's behavior are defined; (3) appropriate child behavior is taught; (4) staff understand and consistently implement the rules, teach the expectations, and give rewards to children for positive behavior; (5) children who display positive behavior are publicly acknowledged; (6) problem behaviors have clear consequences; and (7) staff use data to make decisions about the effectiveness of the system. Information is also provided on applying PBIS to young children, the role of the early childhood educator and paraprofessional in working with children with behavior problems, integrating PBIS into preschool activities and routines, implementing appropriate behavior strategies consistent with constructivist theory, and additional resources. (CR)

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SHOW ME HOW

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE BULLETIN

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS & SUPPORTS (PBIS)

FEBRUARY 2001

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February 2001

Show Me How

Technical Assistance Bulletin

from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS)

*For this article, the term "**preschool**" will be used to describe all the possible locations that ECSE children might receive their services, including Head Start, community early care and education locations, LEA operated preschools, ECSE classrooms, the home (when appropriate), etc.*

What is PBIS?

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a general term that refers to the application of positive behavioral interventions and systems to achieve socially important behavior change (Sugai et al., 2000). Educators have historically reacted to problem behavior in a crisis management mode. Expectations for behavior have not been shared with children, and children have not been taught what "being good" looks and sounds like. In addition, educators have not looked at the environment to determine what effect the setting has on children's behavior. PBIS is, first and foremost, a systems approach to discipline. School teams decide what can be done in the school to prevent behaviors. Also, teachers focus on ***teaching*** the expected, appropriate behaviors just as numbers, colors, and other skills are taught.

"Trying to teach students to stop behaviors without teaching them new skills to deal with their environment will not work."

Tim Knoster, quoted in *Counterpoint* (Teach Students Skills to Overcome their Behaviors, winter 1998).

What are some features of PBIS?

There are a number of features of PBIS that set it apart from traditional behavior management.

* As a systems approach, PBIS strategies are implemented at the preschool, specific setting, classroom, and individual child level. Preschool rules and expectations are those that are implemented by all staff in the general setting. Specific setting approaches are routines or procedures used to support child behavior appropriately in a particular setting. For example, children are taught where to line up to enter the building after outdoor playtime. Classroom systems are designed by individual teachers who need effective strategies to teach preacademic and social skills. Finally, some children will require individual functional behavioral assessment and behavior intervention plans to support their change in behavior.
* Expectations for children's behavior are defined. Preschool staff decide on the rules and examples to teach. For example, one rule may be to be

EC 308342

safe, which means keeping hands and feet to self and walking and using materials appropriately.

* Appropriate child behavior is ***taught***. Just as other skills are taught, teachers provide lessons, examples, reminders, and rewards for learning a skill. If a young child displays inappropriate behavior, it is viewed as an error in learning; additional opportunities are provided for the child to learn the skill.
* Staff understand and consistently implement the rules, teach the expectations, and give rewards to children for positive behavior.
* Children who display positive behavior are publicly acknowledged. Children who are "caught" being good receive rewards and incentives.
* Problem behaviors have clear consequences.
* Staff use data to make decisions about the effectiveness of a system. For example, has the number of times the teacher asked the child to sit back from the group decreased, or is a child receiving more happy face stickers than before? (Lewis, 2000).

Does PBIS apply to young children?

The best time to teach appropriate behavior to children is when they are young. The number of children who display extreme forms of antisocial behavior or who engage in internalizing behavior patterns has steadily increased over the last decade. The 1997 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides specific rules that are designed to promote increased prosocial behaviors in children and discourage educators from simply removing children with disabilities from school.

Most research supports the belief that the earlier intervention begins, the more successful a child will be. As extreme forms of antisocial behaviors are an ever-increasing concern in American schools and communities, many children are exposed to, or are at-risk for, displays of "acting-out behaviors" at younger ages than they were before.

In the 1997 reauthorization of IDEA, the law states:

> The IEP [Individualized Education Program] team shall in the case of a child whose behavior impedes his or her learning or that of others, consider, when appropriate, strategies, including positive behavioral interventions, strategies [sic], and supports to address the behavior. (Section 614[d][3][B][i])

PBIS teaches the necessary skills to replace inappropriate behavior with appropriate ways of acting and reacting.

For children with an IEP, the '97 Amendments require that:

Web Resources

The Behavior Home Page – www.state.ky.us/agencies/behave/homepage.html. Sponsored by the Kentucky Department of Education and the Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling at University of Kentucky, this site allows school personnel, parents, and other professionals to gain access to information, share effective practices, and receive ongoing consultation and technical assistance.

Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports – www.pbis.org/english/index.html. This site features conferences, articles, and materials for individual supports, school-wide supports, and functional assessment as well as an explanation of PBIS.

Positive Behavioral Support: A Bibliography for Schools – http://nichcy.org/pubs/biblio/bib3.htm. This bibliography from the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities includes materials on many topics: behavior problems related to disability, behavioral assessment, classroom management, conflict resolution, aggressive and disruptive students, communication, discipline, behavioral interventions, multicultural issues, and positive behavioral support.

Center for Innovations in Special Education (CISE) – www.coe.missouri.edu/~mocise. CISE has a number of resources on early childhood and behavior that are accessible through the lending library. In addition, newsletters and technical assistance bulletins are available in full text, and information about professional development opportunities is listed on the web.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) – www.naeyc.org/. NAEYC is the nation's largest organization of early childhood educators and others dedicated to improving the quality of programs for children from birth through third grade. Journals, position papers, brochures and more address issues of developmentally appropriate practices.

Virtual Resource Center in Behavioral Disorders – www.coe.missouri.edu/~vrcbd/. This site features teacher problem solving skills (TPSS), multimedia case studies, and on-line conference information.

> Before or not later than 10 days after taking a disciplinary action...the agency shall convene an IEP meeting to develop an [functional behavioral] assessment plan to address that behavior; or review the plan and modify it, as necessary, to address the behavior. (Section 615[k][1][B][i&ii])

In these two circumstances, a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) is required. So, of course, Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) staff need to be as well versed in this IEP component as elementary and secondary staff. The '97 Amendments emphasize the importance of preventing behavioral problems before they occur.

Why do some young children misbehave?

It is generally accepted that children do not randomly exhibit behavior; the behavior serves a purpose. Simply stated, inappropriate behavior serves two purposes for children: to obtain a desired outcome or to avoid it. Many factors contribute to children's misbehavior, including inconsistent discipline in the home, punitive management of behavior at home or at preschool, and a lack of skill in using positive social behaviors. Preschools may also contribute to children's misbehavior by implementing punitive or authoritative approaches and failing to clarify rules, expectations, and consequences for all children.

Barbara Wolfe gives the following reasons why preschoolers may misbehave (Lombardo, 1997):

* They may have difficulty processing proper behavior.
* They may begin with inadequate information. For instance, when given multiple-step directions, some young children only hear the last step.
* It may be a desire on their part for attention.
* They may not have developed any self-motivation.
* They may need security.
* They may be frustrated.

Regardless of the contributing factors for misbehavior, most children can be taught new social skills and appropriate behavior with preschool and classroom supports. Young children who continue to display antisocial behavior will require more intensive supports and individualized behavioral plans as required by IDEA.

What are the roles of the ECSE educator and the paraprofessional in working with a child with behavioral problems?

The success of ECSE children and staff depends upon the written plan and the environment in which activities are carried out. Any paraprofessional who works with young children needs guidance and support. Paraprofessionals must receive training and supervision. Keep in mind that paras and teachers are providing special instruction that will teach the child appropriate behavior and self-control. The goal is for the child to internalize the control needed to behave in an appropriate manner. It is also the responsibility of the professional to assess the child's progress.

Educators need to build comprehensive school-wide systems that reduce chronic challenging behaviors, prevent behavioral challenges in general, and meet the needs of all children. The purpose of the paraprofessional is **not** to control children's behaviors, but to build upon a comprehensive system that promotes prosocial response on the part of each child.

As an ECSE staff member, where do I start?

Because PBIS is an effort to change systems, or to put it another way, the way we do business in preschool, the first step is to form a team of staff to work together. The task is greater than one person can manage. The team needs to be committed to changing the necessary working structures of the preschool to enhance children's behavior. This group of educators is responsible for getting input and "buy in" from all staff for successful implementation. The team also establishes the preschool rules and defines the expectations so all children understand what the rules mean. In addition, early childhood special education staff will want to ensure the rules and expectations are conveyed in a way that young children participating in the program will understand.

The role of ECSE staff is often expanded to work with others, such as families, child care providers, and preschool staff. Therefore, the ECSE staff need to work with these other people to understand the basic principles of PBIS and developmentally appropriate practices. It is important to communicate the rules and expectations with others and to emphasize the need to teach children appropriate social skills versus reacting to behavior as a disciplinary problem.

It is also important to build systems that will provide consistency in behavioral expectations from all staff and family members. If, for example, the child care and education providers are expecting a behavior beyond the child's developmental level while the family is expecting too little, the discrepancy will be confusing for the child.

Finally, it is particularly important for ECSE staff to look at what is being expected of a child when misbehavior occurs. Remember, in simple terms, misbehavior is the attempt to gain or avoid a situation or thing. If, for example, a preschool teacher requires a 3-year-old to sit quietly for 30 minutes at a table and the child starts "acting out," the underlying problem is that the child is being asked to do something that is not appropriate for her development. The "acting out" is the child's way of saying "you are requiring more of me than I am able to do." Decreasing the time she is required to sit at the table or offering the child more time and space to choose learning activities in the room (or outside) may help decrease her "misbehavior."

How can I integrate PBIS into my preschool activities and routines?

To be successful, positive supports and interventions need to be ongoing throughout the day. Transitions between activities are often difficult for children, and teachers will want to remind them of the rules and expected behaviors before transitions take place.

CISE Lending Library Resources

The following are just some of the resources available from the Center for Innovations in Special Education Lending Library. To borrow materials, call 1-800-976-2473 (MO only) or (573) 884-7275, or order on-line at www.coe.missouri.edu/~mocise.

➤**LP 1892 Reframing discipline**. (1997). This set of six videotapes with guides and instruction booklets looks at reframing early childhood discipline. Only one part may be borrowed at a time.

- **LP 1892.01 Doing the groundwork: From stopping misbehavior to teaching skills**
- **LP 1892.02 Connecting with every child: Key to successful discipline**
- **LP 1892.03 Understanding difficult behavior: Why does he do that?**

➤**LP 2533 Meeting the challenge: Effective strategies for challenging behaviors in early childhood environments**. (1999). This 40-page booklet offers an explanation of why challenging behaviors occur in young children and ideas and strategies for working with these children. A functional assessment observation form is included.

➤**LP 2684 Prosocial guidance for the preschool child**. (1999). This 219-page text approaches behavior management in the preschool classroom by integrating prosocial behavior with positive guidance techniques in order for children to get along together.

➤**LP 2726 Strategies for preschool intervention in everyday settings (SPIES)**. (1998). This six-module curriculum divides naturalistic teaching methods into topical activities and skills. Topics include: creating teaching opportunities through promoting child's interest, providing help when responding to cues, incidental teaching with strategies for systematic interventions, tracking progress of child's behavior in relationship to objectives, and the importance of the three years prior to preschool. Corresponding videotapes accompany each module.

➤**LP 2728 Preventing discipline problems**. (2000). This series, which includes six videotapes, three facilitator's guides, and three viewer's guides, teaches how to build a prevention strategy for working positively with children.

- **LP 2728.01 Building a prevention strategy: Getting proactive-getting results**
- **LP 2728.02 Supporting transitions: Easing the troublespots**
- **LP 2728.03 Nurturing responsible behavior: A foundation for guidance**

➤**LP 10079 Behavioral Intervention Planning (BIP)**. (2000). The BIP (revised edition) provides a framework for addressing discipline procedures with students who are eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Some common appropriate preschool activities such as dramatic playtime, housekeeping centers, etc., may offer excellent opportunities for practicing prosocial behaviors. Opportunities to play together and share materials also occur during snack time, art, and fine motor activities, such as using puzzles and manipulatives. Teachers and paraprofessionals should be sure to model the behaviors expected of the children.

It may also be important for itinerant staff to provide direct instruction of social skills within common settings, such as at the preschool, Head Start, child care centers, home, etc. There are many social skills curricula available that target children in preschool.

How can I implement appropriate behavior strategies and still be consistent with constructivist theory?

Positive behavioral interventions and supports are in line with the goals of the constructivist classroom, which strives to develop a community of learners who construct their own convictions about their behavior and how it affects others (*Support and Assistance Update,* 1996). Children must feel a sense of safety in the classroom. This feeling of safety will build their sense of trust. Having common classroom expectations facilitates children's self-regulation while building a community of respect for others in the classroom.

What resources are available to learn more about PBIS?

The good news is that there are many web sites, printed materials, and professional development opportunities available in Missouri--not just for ECSE staff, but also Head Start and early care and education providers. Following is a description of a few of these resources.

* Missouri has developed the Missouri Behavior Initiative, a five-year professional development system plan for positive behavioral support. This plan was developed after a year of planning and discussion among teachers, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) staff, Missouri Safe Schools Program members, university faculty, CISE (Center for Innovations in Special Education) staff, Missouri Regional Professional Development Center directors, the Office of Special Education Program's (OSEP) Center on Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support, and others concerned with the issue of challenging behavior in Missouri's schools.

The plan consists of two components:

1. Professional development opportunities for Missouri educators and early care and education professionals
2. A system for training, supporting, and credentialing a cadre of trainers to provide ongoing, job-embedded professional development at the regional level

* Awareness workshops will also be held this year in five regions of the state to introduce the concepts of PBIS and to inform districts of the availability of Local Improvement Grants for the 2001-2002 school year.

* Another activity of the Missouri Behavior Initiative has been to collaborate with the creators of the Teacher Problem Solving Skills Program (Fitzgerald & Semrau, 1997), an interactive videodisk and CD-ROM-based series. The series uses a case-study approach designed for K-12 teachers and addresses three components:

1. Perspectives on Emotional and Behavioral Disorders
2. Assessment and Planning in Emotional and Behavioral Disorders
3. Instruction and Management in Emotional and Behavioral Disorders.

DESE has subsequently funded the creation of two preschool versions. The first preschool version is a multimedia case study of "Trisha." The purpose of "Trisha" is to enhance the problem-solving skills of early childhood special education and early primary personnel who work with young children with behavioral disorders. The focus is on understanding children from multiple perspectives and the need for collaborative models. Training on "Trisha" is currently being conducted across the state, with more opportunities available for spring and summer, 2001. A copy of the "Trisha" program is available to those who attend training.

Currently, the second early childhood multimedia case study, "Chelsea," is being developed. "Chelsea" will provide child care and early education professionals with methods of observation and practical strategies to teach children with behavioral concerns. Its expected release date is fall, 2001.

* Funding for the implementation of the Missouri Behavior Initiative plan has come from a number of sources. DESE has offered a portion of the U.S. Department of Education's State Improvement Grant to provide funding for school districts that want to implement PBIS in their districts. The Local Improvement Grant recipients are awarded up to $10,000 per school year for the training of building-level teams who effectively use positive behavioral strategies with children with challenging behavior. Resources from the Regional Collaborative on Positive Behavior Support, a federally funded technical assistance project, and the OSEP Center on PBIS are being used to work with the state department and the state planning team to build a statewide network of information and support. Additionally, resources developed by the federally funded Teacher Problem Solving Skills in Behavioral Disorders project are being utilized to provide individual training to teachers and child care providers in Missouri.

Missouri is proud of the collaborative effort that has gone into the planning and implementation of the Missouri Behavior Initiative. State and national resources—both financial and human—have been joined to develop a system that will thrive for years to come. Questions about the Missouri Behavior Initiative should be directed to Kate Numerick, Supervisor, Special Education Effective Practices, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, PO Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65109; (573) 751-7661; knumerick@mail.dese.state.mo.us. For questions about specific training, contact CISE toll free at 1-888-933-3858 (MO only).

In addition, CISE has a number of print resources and web site links available for your use. Please contact CISE at 601 Business Loop 70 West, Suite 152, Columbia, MO 65211; 1-800-976-2473 (MO only) or (573) 884-7275, or visit our web site at www.coe.missouri.edu/~mocise.

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